

Jesus Christ - A for Mr. S. Smith

R I G H T

TO THE

Lord's Supper

CONSIDERED

in

A LETTER

TO

A serious Enquirer after Truth.

BY

A Lover of the same.

By Experience Mayhew



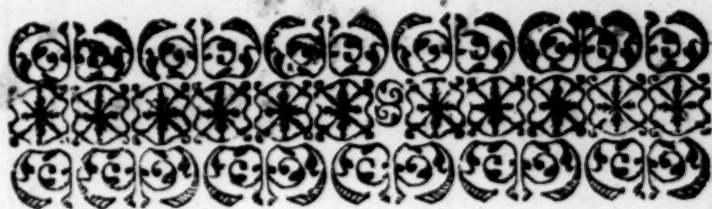
Minister of the Gospel among the Indians

B O S T O N :

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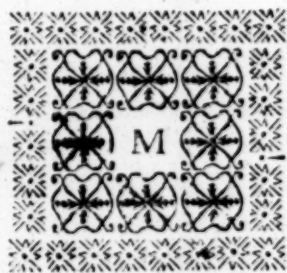
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A
R I G H T
TO THE
LORD'S SUPPER
CONSIDERED.



S I R,



Y Obligations to you have been too many and great, to allow me to decline to gratify your Desire of giving you my Thoughts in Writing, concerning a Right to the Sacrament of the LORD'S SUPPER. I am too well acquainted with you, in the least to question, either the Goodness of your End, in demanding this of me ; or your Prudence, in making

making a proper Use of my Freedom in opening my Mind to you, relating to the Subject of your Enquiry. My own Insufficiency to give you due Satisfaction, is what lies most in the Way of my attempting it. However, whether I fail in it or not, I believe your Candour is such, That you will take in good Part my sincere Endeavours to serve you; and shall therefore without any further Proem or Delay, enter into the Service you require of me.

I shall then, *Sir*, shew you my Opinion on the Point you write to me about, in several PROPOSITIONS, which with their *Illustration*, will comprise the Substance of what I design in this Letter to you.

My first PROPOSITION is, *That no Person has a RIGHT to partake of the Ordinance of the LORD'S SUPPER, but such only as are ALLOWED and COMMANDED of GOD to partake of it.*

Whether we consider the Participation of this Ordinance as a *Duty* or as a *Priviledge*, this will certainly hold a Truth, That none may presume to partake of it, who are not invited and commanded so to do. This is not to be numbred among Things *indifferent*, which may be done or let alone as any Man pleaseth. This Sacrament is one of the *positive Institutions* of Jesus Christ, which ought to be attended by all and only such, as God orders to attend it. If any Man or Woman presumeth to partake of it without his Leave and Command so to do, God may say to such,
yea

yea he does say to them as in *Isai. 1. 12.* *When ye come to appear before me, Who hath required this at your Hands?* And on the other Hand, such as God allows and commands to partake of the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, may not presume to omit or neglect it: if they do they are therein guilty of sinning against God. He that is qualified to partake of the Lord's Supper, according to the Judgment of God expressed in his Word, has a Right to it, and is bound to partake of it, tho' he may think the contrary. If a Man be not qualified, he sins if he receives it, whatever good Opinion he has of himself. *Men's Opinions* concerning themselves or others, do not alter GOD's *Laws*. A Man may be mistaken respecting his own State, and think he has no Right to that which he has a Right to; Or otherwise, he may have a good Right to that which he judgeth himself utterly unqualified for: But God's Commands are uniform and steady; they change not as Men's Notions and Opinions do. Every Man is either qualified, according to the Word of God to partake of the Lord's Supper, or unqualified for it: if he be qualified, he is bound to partake; if unqualified, he may not presume to partake of this holy Ordinance. The like may be said, with respect to the Judgment of any Church and Churches. If a Man be qualified to partake of the Sacrament, no Judgment of any Church can take away his Right: If he be really unqualified for it, no Church can give him a Right to it. Indeed in Point of Order, no Person may partake, unless by the Church he be permitted to do it; but

then if the Church do admit a visibly unqualified Person, they are guilty of Sin in it; and so they are also if they debar a *visibly qualified* Person from it. I say *visibly qualified*, because the Church is bound to admit such as are visibly qualified, whether they are really qualified or not; but in this Case the Persons offering themselves are guilty——. A Person ought to come to the Lord's Supper, who is according to Rule qualified for it, whatever other Qualification, not required, he may be without. and knows that he is so. Therefore, if the *Grace of Regeneration* be no necessary Qualification to give a Man a Right; The judicious Mr. Stoddard erred not, in saying, *A Person might and ought to partake, tho' he knew himself unconverted*, having those Qualifications that are necessary.

From what has been said we may infer, That it is *not probable*, that it should be very *difficult* for a serious Enquirer to know whether he has a *Right* to the *Lord's Supper*, or not. It is not likely, that our merciful Redeemer would make the Terms of Church Communion such, that it should be *extreamly difficult* for Persons to know whether they have a Right to partake of this Sacrament, or not, and so leave them under unavoidable Perplexities, with Respect to this important Case. Does God require us to partake, or does he at our Peril forbid us to eat of this Bread and drink of this Cup? I would have this remembered, it being a Consideration that I shall have Occasion to make Use of. At present, I say I believe it is not Jesus Christ that does expose his professing People

People to such Difficulties ; but the Mistake of some of his Ministers, who misunderstand, and so do not rightly expound some of his Commands, given to his Disciples. Thus much on my first Proposition.

PROPOSITION II.

GOD *does not allow and command* THE WICKED, *while they continue such, to partake of the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper.* I say, while they *continue such* ; for otherwise they are invited and required to qualify themselves for it, and then to come to it. By *the Wicked* here I intend such as in Scripture do generally bear this Denomination.

When the Question is asked, *Who have a Right to partake of the Lord's Supper?* it is supposed there are some that *have* a Right to it, and others that have *not* ; so that there are some that may come to it, and others that may not come. Now when we have found who have *not* a Right, we shall be brought the nearer to understand who *have* a Right to this holy Ordinance.

I then affirm, That such as are usually, in Scripture, stiled *the Wicked*, have no Right hereunto. God does not allow them to partake of it. The *Sacraments*, as well as the *Sacrifices* of such are an Abomination, *Prov. 21.*
27

Who are in *Scripture* usually intended by *the Wicked*, and who I here therefore intend, we may see in the following Particulars. (1) All *Atheists*, who believe not the Being and Perfections

Perfections of God :such as are described Psal. 14. 1,---4. *The Fool bath said in his Heart, there is no God: they are corrupt, they have done abominable Works, there is none that doth Good. The Lsrd looked down from Heaven upon the Children of Men; to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy: There is none that doeth Good, no not one. Have all the Workers of Iniquity no Knowledge? who eat up my People as they eat Bread, and call not upon the Lord. With this compare Psal. 10. 2, to 11. also Psal. 94. 3, to 7. & 50. 16, to 21. (2) All such Infidels as believe not that divine Revelation, which is contained in the Scriptures of the old and new Testament: and so all who do not acknowledge the Doctrines and Precepts of God in our Bibles, as the Doctrines and Commandments of the Lord; especially the Record God has given of his Son in the Gospel, and the Precepts of the moral Law, which are of perpetual Obligation to all Mankind. See *John* 5. 46. and *Acts* 28. 24. also *2 Cor.* 6. 15. and *1 Tim.* 5. 8. (3) All such as have no Fear of God before their Eyes, (*Psal.* 36. 1,---4. and *Gen* 20. 11.) (4) All such as put no Trust or Confidence in God, nor have any Hope in his Mercy: I join these together because of their near Relation one to the other; and such Persons as these are certainly grossly wicked. It is possible Persons unregenerate may put some Trust in God, and have some sort of Hope in him, and of such a Trust and Hope I here speak, see *Psal.* 78. 34, 35, 36. If gross Hypocrites may do so, much more may such as are morally sincere.*

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(5) All such as *will not seek God*, or call upon his Name, as those in *Psal.* 10. 4 and 14. 4. also *Isai.* 43. 22. and 64. 7. (6) All such as do *not repent* of their Sins, and *will not be reformed*, but go on *obstinately* in their Iniquities, how many Prayers soever they may make, are yet to be reckoned among the *Wicked* I am speaking of. Of such as these we read, *Isai.* 1. 11, to 15. and *Chap.* 58. 1 to 4. also *Jer.* 7. 8, 9, 10. (7) All *gross Hypocrites*: who tho' they carry themselves well, so far as appeareth unto Men, yet do it only for a Shew, that they may get Credit and be in Esteem in the World, and not that by what they do they may approve themselves unto God, by doing the Things that he requireth, *Mat.* 6. 5. and 23. 14. (8) All such *self-righteous Persons* as think by their own good Works, to merit and deserve God's Favour; or that aim at working out a Righteousness that will entitle them to eternal Happiness; and so do not seek to be found in Christ, and to be cloathed with that perfect Righteousness, which he has wrought out and brought in for such as do or shall believe in him, *Rom.* 10. 3. *Luk.* 18. 9, to 12.

All these, and whatsoever sorts of Persons else are generally mentioned in Scripture, under the Denomination of *the Wicked*, are not allowed, but *forbid* to partake of the Ordinance of the *Lord's Supper*. Such may not *declare God's Statutes*, nor take his Covenant into their Mouth, *Psal.* 50. 16 *The Sacrifices of such are an Abomination to the Lord.* *Prov.* 15. 8. and 21. 27. before mentioned.

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PROPOSITION III.

ALL *who are still* IN AN UNREGENERATE State, are NOT, according to the *Stile and Language of Scripture*, WICKED PERSONS, and as such, excluded from the Lord's Supper.

They seem to me to be very much mistaken, who think, that *all* who are *not born again, born of the Spirit*, in the Sense in which these Words are used, *Joh. 3. 3, 5.* are the same with those, who are in the Word of God commonly called, *the Wicked*. It is true, that when Persons are born of the Spirit, they have a very glorious Change wrought in 'em, which no other Persons do experience. They have *new Hearts* given to them, and *new Spirits* put within them, are made *Partakers of the divine Nature*, are indowed with *the Image of God*, which Man lost by his Fall. Indeed when this is done, they are *glorified*. They are made *Partakers of some Degree of the same Glory* that all the Saints shall enjoy in Heaven for ever; which I doubt not is the Meaning of *their being glorified*, who are *effectually called and justified*, Rom. 8. 29. with which we may compare 2 Cor. 3. 18. *But we all with open Face beholding as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.* God glorifies us when he indues us with his Image. To *sanctify* us is to *glorify* us; and we are then *sanctified*, when we are *renewed in the Image of him that created us*, Col. 2. 10.

But we ought to consider also, that there is ordinarily, a *very considerable Change* wrought in

in the Souls of Men before they pass under that Change which we call *Regeneration*; and *that Change* is a Work or Effect of God's Word and Spirit on Men's Souls, as well as *this*. Now tho' *that* is a Work very inferiour in the Nature of it, to *Regeneration*, or saving Conversion; yet, it is not to be despised, as if it were of no Value and no ways *beneficial*. For to *some* it is *so*, eventually; and it is *so*, respecting *all*, in the Nature and Tendency of it. Nor is it true, that such as are *the Subjects of such a Change*, are, in Scripture, spoken to, and of, in the same Manner and Language, as *the Wicked* are, before described: And there is great Reason for this.

That you may not think, that in this I am altogether singular, I will here transcribe some Words of that learned and judicious Man, Dr. OWEN, in his *Perseverance of the Saints*, Page 10. Sect. 17. "Of those who are said to *believe* and to be *holy* REALLY, and in the Truth of the Thing itself; there are *two Sorts*. FIRST such as having received sundry common Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, as *Illumination* of the Mind, *Change of Affections*, and thence *Amendment* of Life, with *Sorrow of the World*, *legal Repentance*, *temporary Faith*, and the like, which are all TRUE and REAL in their Kind, do thereby become *Vessels* in the great House of God; being changed, as to their *Use*, tho' not in their *Nature*; continuing *Stone* and *Wood* still, tho' hewed & turned into the Serviceableness of *Vessels*, and on that Account are frequently termed *Saints* and *Believers*. On such

" as

" as these there is a *lower* (and in some a *sub-*
 " *ordinate*) *Work of the Spirit* effectually pro-
 " ducing (*in and on all the Faculties of their*
 " *Souls*) somewhat *true, good, and useful* in
 " itself, answering in some Likeness and Suita-
 " bleness of Operation unto the great Work
 " of *Regeneration*, which faileth not. There
 " is in them *Light, Love, Joy, Faith, Zeal,*
 " *Obedience, &c.* all *TRUE in their Kind*, which
 " make many of them, in whom they are, do
 " *worthily* in their Generation ; howbeit,
 " they attain not to the *Faith of God's Elect,*
 " neither doth Christ live in them, &c."

These described by the *Doctor*, are not the
 same with the *Wicked*, of whom I have spoken.
 No, these are *Believers, Saints, or holy, or*
righteous Persons : and this not meerly, because
 they profess themselves to be such, and are
 such, in a Judgment of Charity ; but as Dr.
 Owen affirms, are said to *believe* and to be *holy*,
 REALLY, and in Respect of the TRUTH of the
 Thing itself, and the *common Gifts and Graces*
 wrought in them by the *Spirit of God, &c.* as in
 the Words recited. Such Persons are said to
believe, Luk. 8. 13. and Acts 8. 13. they are al-
 so said to be *sanctified* or made *holy*, Heb. 10.
 29. and to have *escaped the Pollutions that are*
in the World, thro' the Knowledge of our Lord
and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet 2. 20. Such are
 also said to *have been enlightned, and to have*
tasted the heavenly Gift, and to have been Par-
takers of the Holy Ghost, &c. as in Heb. 6. 4 5.
 Yea, such are called *Righteous*, Ezek. 18 24.
 But when the *Righteous* turneth away from his
Righteousness, and committeth Iniquity, and doth
 according

according to all the Abominations that the wicked Man doth, shall he live? All his Righteousness which he hath done shall not be mentioned: In his Trespasts that he hath trespassed, and in his Sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. And this Righteousness was such, that they should have lived, if they had not turned away from it; as is evident in the Place quoted, and several others. Not that Persons, in this Sense **RIGHTEOUS**, are already in a State of Grace and Salvation, but, that in due Time they should be so, if they would persevere; being at present in the Way in which Salvation is to be obtained; see Matth. 10. 22, 23. And ye shall be hated of all Men for my Name's sake: But he that endureth to the End, shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this City, flee ye into another: For verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the Cities of Israel, 'till the Son of Man be come. And Mat. 24. 13. But he that shall endure unto the End, the same shall be saved. Hos. 6. 3. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord. Gal. 6. 9. And let us not be weary in well-doing: For in due Season we shall reap, if we faint not. As for the Regenerate, their Salvation is already secured. They already have eternal Life, Joh. 5. 24. Their Salvation does not now depend on this Condition, if they continue to believe; for this is included in the Promise they are under of being eternally saved. By what has been said, it does, I think, plainly appear, that tho' such as are, in Scripture, called the Wicked, have no Right to the Lord's Supper, yet some unregenerate Persons may have a Right to it.

PROPOSITION IV.

None but DISCIPLES of JESUS CHRIST have a Right to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

I do not here affirm, That every Disciple of Jesus Christ, has an immediate Right to partake of this Sacrament, or is in a present Capacity to receive it; but, That for Persons to be Disciples of Christ, is so necessary, that without this no Man has a Right to the Lord's Supper. When our Lord first instituted this holy Sacrament, he gave it to his Disciples and none else; and he ordered those to whom he then administered it, and their Successors, to do as he, in their Presence, had done; and this even to his second Coming, *Luk. 22. 19. 1 Cor. 11. 25, 26.* But we must not think, that because these were all of them *Ministers*, yea *Apostles*, to whom Christ first gave the Sacrament, it will from hence follow, that none but Ministers have a Right to it. The Command of *Administering* this Ordinance, was indeed only given to *Ministers*; but that of *receiving* of it was not so, but belonged to *Disciples*, as such, whether they were Ministers, or others. Accordingly the Church of Corinth was by the Apostle admonished and instructed, with Relation to it, *1 Cor. 11. 23*, and onward. Others besides Ministers need it, to assist their Remembrance of Christ, and are required to qualify themselves to partake of it.

Now a DISCIPLE is the same with a *Learner* or *Scholar*. And accordingly, they are all Disciples of Jesus Christ, who are committed to his Care, in the Way of the Gospel: And thus

this

this Denomination comprehendeth, not only
 professing Believers, but their infant Seed also,
 such as are, with their Parents, comprehended
 in the Covenant. But here I intend, by *Dis-*
ciples, such only, as by their own personal and
 voluntary Submission to Christ, as their Master
 and Instructor, take upon them the Name and
 Denomination of *Christians* or *Disciples*; by
 which Name Believers on Christ were called,
Acts 11. 26. Nor do I say, that they who are
only nominally such have a Right to the Sacra-
 ments; for so gross Hypocrites and other
 wicked Persons, would have a Right to this Or-
 dinance, which is by me denied. I would not
 be mistaken: None, I say, but such as are *Dis-*
ciples REALLY, have a Right to this Sacrament
 of the Supper. If Persons only seem to be
 Disciples, then they only seem to have a Right:
 But then I affirm, that Persons may be *really*
 Disciples of Christ, who are *not* in a *regenerate*
 State, and will prove this in my next Proposi-
 tion. At Present, I say, that a *Disciple* of Je-
 sus Christ, is one who submits himself to his In-
 struction, and endeavours to learn of him, and
 be obedient to him. Thus such as were Fol-
 lowers of *John*, were *his Disciples*, *Mat.* 9. 11.
 And such as followed *false Teachers* were *their*
Disciples, *Acts* 20. 30. Thus CHRIST had
 many *Disciples* for a Time, that on a Disgust
 forsook him, *John* 6. 66. I deny not, that by
Disciples of CHRIST, Persons *truly godly* are
sometimes intended, as in *Luk.* 14. 33. But I
 take not the Word in this strict Sense, when I say
 that none but *Disciples* of CHRIST, have a Right
 to the Sacrament: Therefore, by *real Disci-*
ples,

ples, I intend not such as are, in Scripture, said to be converted or born again; but such as are *morally sincere*, whether they are Disciples, in the strict Sense of the Word, or not. And I esteem a Person *morally sincere*, when making a good Profession, he *does indeed believe*, what he says he does believe, and *does intend*, what he says he does intend, and when he *practiseth*, what he says he does practice; which, that a Person may do, who is yet in an *unregenerate State*, is what I am, in the next Place, to make manifest.

PROPOSITION V.

Some are DISCIPLES of JESUS CHRIST, who are NOT yet in a REGENERATE State.

I mean they are so *really and in Truth*, and not by a false and hypocritical Profession. *Some*, I acknowledge, pass for Disciples among Men, by Means of their Professing, and making a Shew of being religious, when indeed they are nothing less—Such are they who notwithstanding their Profession of Religion, do not intend what they profess, nor believe what they say; nor design to practice what they promise, or at all endeavour it. All they do in Religion, is but a *meer Shew*, to deceive those among whom they live and do converse. In a Word, I intend *gross Hypocrites*, and these I acknowledge have no Right to the Lord's Supper. Such are intended in 2 *Tim.* 3. 5, 6. *Mat.* 23. 14. and Chap. 5. 6. *Ezek.* 33. 31. *Gal.* 2. 4. But there are *other Professors* of Religion, who, tho' they are not savingly converted, yet

yet are they not to be numbred amongst such gross Hypocrites, as these but now mentioned; and I question whether they are any where called Hypocrites, in Scripture. Now it is of such as these that I affirm, that they may be and are truly called *Disciples of CHRIST*, tho' they have not yet experienced the *new Birth*, and are not yet *pass'd from Death to Life*, as in Joh. 5. 34.

To make this manifest, I shall here observe, That, whereas the *Disciples of JESUS CHRIST* have in Scripture several *Names or Titles* given them, as, *Disciples, Believers, Christians, Saints*, &c. These Names and Titles are all or most of them, according to the *Stile and Language* of the Scriptures, applicable to some that are not savingly converted. I shall briefly consider those now mentioned; and (1) For the Word *Disciple*, we have already seen in Part, that it is applied to some that are not in a regenerate State. A Person *professing* the Religion of Jesus Christ, with a *moral Sincerity*, as above explained, must be acknowledged to be a *Disciple* of his, tho' not yet in a State of Grace. Persons may be actually entred into Christ's School, and be under his Instruction, tho' they have not yet been so far taught of him, as to be savingly acquainted with him, and the Things belonging to their eternal Peace and Welfare, or to *know the Truth as it is in Jesus*, and live according to it.

Nor does the Use of this Word in Scripture necessarily import such a Knowledge and Practice of spiritual Things and Duties, as is peculiar to Persons in a State of Grace, but it is most

commonly used for such as were *Followers of JESUS CHRIST*, and as have received his Doctrine, without any Design of restraining the Sense of it, to such as were, in the strictest Sense, sincere Converts, see *Mark* 8. 14. and *Acts* 9. 1. (2) So the Word, to *believe*, is frequently used with Relation to such as believe *the Doctrine of CHRIST*, without being restrained in the Application of it, to such as believe in a saving Manner, see *Acts* 21. 20, and 25. *1 Tim.* 4. 12. and *John* 2. 23, 24, 25. Persons may *believe* in the Sense of these Places, tho' they are not savingly converted; they are not *Infidels*. (3) The Word *Christian*, is not, I think, ever in Scripture used, in such a restrained Sense, as to signify such only as are regenerate, but largely, for such as *profess and visibly obey the Gospel of CHRIST*, whether they are truly converted or not: So I think it may be taken in the three Places where it is used, *viz.* *Acts* 11. 26. and 26. 28. also *1 Pet.* 4. 16. (4) People are also in Scripture, called *Saints* and *Holy*, not always on account of real *saving Holiness* wherewith they are supposed to be endued: Nor yet on the Account of a *relative Holiness* only, as being devoted to God in his Covenant; but partly also on the Account of a *real Change* wrought in them, by the Word and Spirit of God, tho' that Change do not amount to a saving Conversion. This is plainly affirmed by Dr. Owen, in the Place before quoted, in my third Proposition. What a *great Change* such are sometimes the Subjects of, we may see in *2 Pet.* 2. 20, 21, 22. *For if after they have escaped the Pollutions of the World*

World through the Knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again intangled therein, and overcome; the latter End is worse with them than the Beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the Way of Righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment delivered unto them. But it happened unto them according to the true Proverb, The Dog is turned to his own Vomit again; and, The Sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the Mire, with which compare Heb. 6. 4. and Chap. 10. 29. also Ezek. 18. 24, and 26. Which Places, and others like them, being duly considered, we have no Reason to doubt, but that when Church Members are called Saints, and are said to be Holy, who are not really new Creatures, a real Change wrought in them may be one Ground and Reason of it, see 2 Cor. 1. 1. 1 Thes. 5. 27. They are not all savingly holy who are spoken of in these Places, and many others, where Persons are so denominated. When Persons are described in Scripture by such Words, as are applicable only to the regenerate; then I say, that Persons who are not in this Sense, Disciples and Believers, may be admitted to the Lord's Supper. See Mr. Willard on the Catechism, Page 863. Col. 2.

It now appears, that tho' none but *Disciples* have a Right to the Lord's Supper, yet Christ may have many Disciples who are not in a regenerate State.

PROPOSITION VI.

Such as are DISCIPLES of JESUS CHRIST are NOT DEBARRED from coming to the Lord's Supper,

per, on the Account of their WANTING the Grace of REGENERATION, or because they are not yet born again.

Tho' it be granted that none have a Right but such as are *Disciples* of JESUS CHRIST, yet since I have proved, that Persons may be *Disciples* that are *not born again*, I deny that it can be proved by Scripture, that *these Disciples* are not allowed to partake of this Ordinance: For unto *Disciples* it was given in the Institution of it. with a Command to receive it; and if some learned Men are not mistaken, *Judas* himself was one of them. And who can shew me from the Word of God, that none of the Disciples of Christ may come to the Sacrament, unless they have experienced the new Birth, whatever preparatory Dispositions they may be under, and however nigh unto the Kingdom of God they may be, as the *Scribe* in *Mark* 12. 34. Tho' such are not yet passed from Death to Life, yet they are of that Number, *who are pressing into* (or towards) *the Kingdom of God*, *Luk.* 16. 16. *endeavouring to take it by Force*, *Mat.* 11. 12. *Striving to enter in at the strait Gate*, *Luk.* 13. 24. *being engaged in working out their own Salvation with Fear and Trembling* *Phil.* 2. 12. All which may be verified of *some awakened Souls*, who yet are not savingly converted. Please to consider how greatly such may be reformed in their Lives, *2 Pet.* 2. 20. and what Experiences they may have, *Heb.* 6. 4. And yet such Attainments as these are no sufficient Foundation whereon we may assure any Person, that he is in a State of Salvation. But then, how shall we prove that Per-

sons

sons so qualified have no Right to the Lord's Supper, and cannot lawfully come to it? For my Part, I think *awakened Souls*, under such a Work of common Grace, stand in great Need of *all the Helps* God offers them, to excite and engage them to flee unto Christ, and lay hold on him for the Salvation he offereth to them: And I am perswaded, that the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper* is one of *those Helps*: Yea, there is that in it, which has a plentiful Tendency to awaken such as are not sufficiently pricked at the Heart, on the Account of their many great and heinous Sins.

In this Sacrament there is a Discovery of the dreadful *Sinfulness of Sin*, and of *God's Hatred* and Detestation of it; and that it would not stand with the *Justice* of God to suffer it to go unpunished; insomuch that his *Wrath*, on the Account of it, must needs be executed, either on the Persons of the *Offenders* themselves, or on a *Surety* interposing to save them.

In this Sacrament God also shews, That such was his *Love* and *Compassion* towards the perishing Children of Men, that rather than they should be damned forever, he was willing to give his only begotten Son, to be a Propitiation for their Sins, by dying a bitter & shameful Death for them, as is declared in the Scriptures, see *Joh. 4. 9. 10. 1 Cor 11. 26.* And as the *Love* of THE FATHER was manifested herein, so the *Love* of THE SON was no less so, in undertaking and going thro' this Work, *Rom. 5. 6, 7.*

In this Ordinance there is also a *most gracious Offer* of this Saviour (whose Sufferings and Death are represented in it) made unto guilty
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and convinced Sinners, who stand in need of such a Saviour, and are invited by Faith to lay hold on him. For my Part, I doubt not but that the very same Offer of Christ is made to Sinners in this Sacrament, as is made to them in the preached Gospel. Consider Gal 3. 1. *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you should not obey the Truth, before whose Eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you?* Now it seems to me, that poor unregenerate Sinners stand in need of such a Help, as well as the Regenerate.

And I know not why the Eye may not affect the Heart, in seeing the Sacrament administred, as well as the Ear, in hearing the Gospel preached. Christ foretold, in *John 12. 32.* that when he should be lifted up, he would draw all Men to him: *Which lifting up of JESUS CHRIST,* tho' it firstly and principally intends his being lifted on the Cross, when he was crucified; yet it may well be understood to include in it his being held forth in the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments, and particularly in this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, *John 3. 14, 15.* And as *Moses lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderness,* even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal Life, compare here with *Isai. 45. 22.* Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the Ends of the Earth: For I am God, and there is none else. How much might awakened Sinners gain by it, if they would improve this Help?

But it will be said, That Persons must EXAMINE themselves before they come to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, lest they eat and drink

drink unworthily, and so eat and drink Judgment to themselves. To which I ANSWER, That this is readily granted; but still the Question remaineth, *What Qualifications Persons must find themselves to have, before they are allowed to come to the Sacrament?* If it be said, *They must find themselves to be in a regenerate State before they offer themselves;* this is to beg the Thing in Question. It does not yet appear, that this is required to the End mentioned, but rather that this is not required. If it be further said, *That Persons must not come to the Lord's Supper, unless they can DISCERN the Lord's Body in it;* I acknowledge this to be a Truth; because the Scripture is clear for it: But then I utterly deny, that an Ability to discern the Lord's Body in the Lord's Supper, is peculiar to the regenerate. He that believes the Doctrines of the Sufferings of the Son of God, in our Nature, for the Sins of the World, and understands how these Sufferings of his are signified and shewed forth in the Sacrament, may be truly said to discern the Lord's Body therein. It is true indeed, that the Regenerate do discern the Lord's Body in a more excellent and affecting Manner, than unregenerate Persons can do: But still it remains unproved, That such a Discerning as this is absolutely necessary to a lawful Participation in the Lord's Supper.

If it be again said, *That as adult Persons may not be baptised, unless they BELIEVE WITH ALL THEIR HEART, Acts 8. 37 So, without such Faith, Persons may not partake of the Lord's Supper;* I readily acknowledge the Truth of this: But then I say, That Men's believing
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with all their Heart, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, as in the Place referred to, does not necessarily imply their being in a regenerate State. It may imply no more than this, That they *sincerely and firmly believe what they profess*, and are not *hypocritical* in the Profession they make, as may appear by comparing the Place quoted with Jer. 3. 10. *And yet for all this, her treacherous Sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole Heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord.* Where doing a Thing *with the whole Heart* is opposed to the doing it *feignedly*: The Question concerning *the Faith of the Eunuch* was not, whether he believed with that kind of Faith which is peculiar to a regenerate Saint, which he might have, and there was good Reason to suppose that he had, whether he did before this knew that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah, or not, he being then a zealous Proselyte, as sufficiently appears, and as *Cornelius*, mentioned *Acts* 10. 1, 2. also was: But the Thing then necessary to be enquired after, was, whether he believed that Jesus now affirmed to be the Christ, or the Messiah promised in the Scriptures of the old Testament was indeed so; because his doing this was necessary, in order to his being initiated into the Gospel-Church State, tho' he was a good Man before.

I readily acknowledge also, That REPENTANCE is necessary in order to a Participation in the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper: But then I conceive that Persons may be in some Sense *real Penitents* who are *not yet born again*: And this I think may be proved from *Matth.*

II. 20, 21. *Jonah* 3. 5, to 10. compared with *Mat.* 12. 41. *Repenting in Dust and Ashes*, in the first of these Places, does not imply the great Work of *Regeneration*: For if that had been intended, the mighty Works done in *Corazin* and *Bethsaida* had not been sufficient to have produced it in *Tyre* and *Sidon*, or any other Place. See also *Heb.* 6. 4, & 6. *It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, &c. if they shall fall away, to renew them again to Repentance.*

Being without a Wedding Garment at a Gospel Feast, does, I think, doubtless intend the Want of proper Qualifications for a *visible Church State*; and what these be I have already shewed. In the *Church Visible*, no such unqualified Persons are ever found.

Persons qualified, as has been expressed, do not, in partaking of the Lord's Supper, *put their Seal to a Blank*, as has by some been said, tho' they are not in a converted State. The Thing they set their Seal to, is *not* their own personal Interest in the everlasting Mercies of the new Covenant; but what they SEAL, is their *Assent to the Truth of the Gospel*, which they profess to believe, and their own *Resolution to seek for an Interest in JESUS CHRIST, and his Benefits* offered therein. Nor do all serious Professors of Religion design, in the Profession they make, to declare to the World, *That they look upon themselves as in a regenerate and justified State.* If People tho't this to be what a publick Profession signifieth, few, I believe, would venture to make it; a good Degree of Assurance being necessary in order to it.

PROPOSITION VII.

There are GREAT INCONVENIENCIES attending on this Assertion, That none but the Regenerate have a Right to partake of the Lord's Supper.

I shall briefly mention some of them.

I. Very few can, on this Supposition, satisfy themselves, whether they may lawfully partake of the Lord's Supper, or not: And so many would, on this Principle, be unavoidably exposed to very great Perplexities, with Respect to this Question, *Whether they may and ought to desire an Admission to the Lord's Table, or no?* Such as are serious would fain act in this Matter as they ought to do. They desire to approve themselves to God, with Respect to this important Case, *Have I a Right to the Lord's Supper, or not?* Or, which is the same Thing, *Am I born again, or am I in a State of Nature?* Many a one may here truly say, I have often examined myself, and yet cannot determine this great Question. And indeed we have Reason to think, That there are but few comparatively of the true Children of God, that are able, satisfactorily to resolve themselves in this Point: So that, if they partake, they do it very doubtingly, and if they do not they are in great Fear that they sin against God in neglecting it. And thus these poor Creatures know not what to do on the Supposition I oppose. They know they believe the Truth of God's Word, Law, and Gospel; and know they desire to serve God and obtain Mercy with him; but they do not know whether they do

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these Things with a *gracious Sincerity* or not. There is such a Resemblance betwixt *common* and *saving* GRACE, that they know not whether they have the latter of these two, or no; and so know not what to do. It is not very likely that God should have made the Terms of Communion in his visible Church, such as necessarily do involve serious Professors of Religion in such Difficulties as these, as I have observed in my first Proposition.

2. The Principle which I argue against, seems to me to expose *Ministers* and *Churches* to very great Difficulties, respecting those they should admit to the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper: For if none have any Right to the Lord's Supper, but such as are in a State of Grace, but will, if they partake of it, eat and drink Judgment to themselves, it seems to me, that they have a very difficult Task, who are obliged to judge whether such as offer themselves to their Communion are qualified for it, or not; and a Mistake in this Point may be of dangerous Consequence to the Persons admitted, or denied; especially their Admission, if they are unfit, will be very dangerous.

If it be said, *They can but determine the Point according to a Judgment of Charity*; I answer, That if this be so, this Charity seems to be too uncertain and precarious a Thing to Judge by, in a Case of so great Consequence, as wherein a Person's Soul is in great Danger. Grounds for Charity will admit of a great many Degrees: And it may be enquired, Whether those that are to judge of Men's spiritual State, according to this Rule, are to give their Sentence according

ding to the highest or lowest Grounds for the Charity intended, or some of the intermediate ones ; and if so, which of them ? And I desire to know, who made them Judges of what God only can judge of? *Jer. 17.10.* I should think they must needs be in great Danger, lest they should be mistaken in this Affair, or have already been so, or lest they take upon them that which indeed is none of their Business.

3. It is to be feared, that on the Hypothesis opposed, many may be *hindred* from Communion in special Ordinances, who have a *good Right* to them ; and others *admitted* that have *none*. People being fixed in this Principle, That none but the Regenerate have a *Right to special Ordinances*, many, even of those, who are very seriously concerned that they may approve themselves to God, being in great Doubt of the Sincerity of their own Hearts, are in all Likelihood hereby kept back from offering themselves to join in Church Communion. It is evident, that the more serious Persons be, the greater Sense they have of the Deceitfulness and desperate Wickedness of their own Hearts, by Nature ; and such as these are very apt to be proportionably doubtful of their own Sincerity. These feel and observe so much Corruption working in them, that they cannot easily persuade themselves of the Integrity of their own Souls, and so dare not venture, in a long Time, if ever ; to join themselves to the Church of Christ ; and so *the Church* is hindred from having many Members, who are indeed, fit Matter for it, and *such serious Souls*, from the Advantages and Comforts, which they might otherwise enjoy. On

On the other Hand, Persons far less religious and comparatively but little concerned for the Glory of God and the Salvation of their own Souls, and who think the Difficulties of Religion are nothing so great as others think them to be, can easily perswade themselves that they are true Christians, and are passed from Death to Life; being, as they think, born again. Such as these can, therefore, without any great Difficulty, offer themselves to the Communion of the Church; and thus great Numbers probably do, while, on their own Principles, they are unqualified for it; and by this Means Churches are corrupted rather than kept pure and holy.

4. I would ask this Question; Is there not some Danger, That, on the Principle I oppose, Persons submitting themselves to Examination, with Respect to the State of their Souls, in order to their Admission to the Sacrament, may be very greatly hurt, either by having too favourable a Judgment passed on their Condition; or otherwise too severe a Sentence or Censure, with Respect to it? The Principle I argue against, supposeth the Candidate, for Church-Priviledges, to offer himself to Trial, with Respect to his Fitness for them; and the Principal Question to be determined in this Trial, is *Whether the Person under Examination be, or be not in a converted Estate?* And of this Question, the Elders and Brethren are the Judges. If they judge him converted they admit him: If they think he offers no good Evidence of his Conversion, they refuse him. Now it seems to me, That a Mistake in Judgment,

ment, here, if such a Mistake be committed, may greatly hurt the Person concerned in the Sentence, about whose Estate it is given. As suppose the Church should judge him to be *converted*, when indeed he *is not*; and thereupon admit him to their Communion; Will not this tend greatly to confirm the Man in the unhappy Mistake he is himself already under, who had not offered himself, if he had not hoped his Estate to be good: He will be very likely now to say in his Heart, I have Reason to believe that the Bitterness of Death is passed from me. I thought indeed before, that I was in a regenerate State, but now I have the Judgment of the Brethren and Elders of the Church in my Favour: Why then should I doubt of this? When yet the poor Man is still in the Gall of Bitterness and in the Bond of Iniquity, as in *Acts* 8. 23. And it is well if that be not his Case, in *Isai.* 44. 20. *He feedeth on Ashes, and a deceived Heart hath turned him aside, so that he cannot deliver his Soul, nor say, Is there not a Lie in my right Hand?*

On the other Hand, Suppose the Person should be a *sincere Convert*, and yet the Elders and Church should be mistaken, and think him still to be *in a State of Nature*, and so deny him Communion; Would not this be likely grievously to wound a poor weak Believer, and so *break the bruised Reed, and quench the smoking Flax*, contrary to what our Saviour does, and would have his Ministers do, *Matth.* 12. 20.

I am afraid of such unhappy Consequences as I have now mentioned, and which seem to attend the Principle I oppose. Whereas if we allow

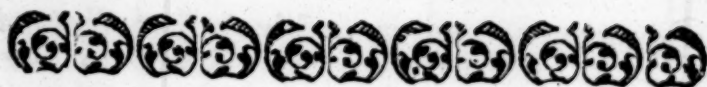
allow a *moral Sincerity* in Men's *Profession and Practice of Religion*, to be sufficient to give them a *Right* to the Privileges of a Church State, we may tell them, we are not sufficient Judges of their spiritual Estate, so as to pass Sentence, whether they are converted or not; and that, as to this, they must look to themselves, examine their own Hearts, and pray, as in Psal. 139. 23, 24. *Search me, O God, &c.* And that they must by no Means think, that we judge them to be already in a regenerate State, from our admitting of them to Church Communion; for we receive them, not as already in a State of Grace and Salvation, but as Persons, with a *moral Sincerity*, endeavouring to get into such an Estate, and unto that End, laying hold on the Covenant: But whether they are converted or not, they themselves are the most proper Judges, and ought daily to examine themselves, and prove their own Hearts and Works, in order to their being able to determine how it is with them.

This, *Sir*, is the Truth of my present Thots on the Point which you were pleas'd to ask my Opinion about; and which having, after my broken Manner, offered to you, I rest

Your Humble

and Obliged

Servant.



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